

ERIC P. NEWMAN NUMISMATIC EDUCATION SOCIETY

6450 Cecil Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63105

September 3, 1992

Dr. Paul Anderson
Archivist
Washington U. School of Medicine
Campus Box 8132
660 So. Euclid Ave.
St. Louis, Mo 63110

Dear Dr. Anderson:

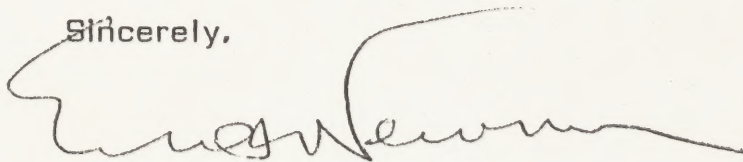
Confirming our conversation, I would appreciate it if you would tell me whatever information you have on Dr. Simpson, who practiced medicine in St. Louis in the 1810-1830 period. He issued money from the St. Louis Drug and Medicine store, which he operated. The money was issued because of a shortage of change during the 1817 period. I enclose a copy of the only example known of that money. Dr. Simpson later became Postmaster. He is mentioned in **Billon, Annals of St. Louis**.

Dr. Samuel Soule wrote up the lives of early St. Louis doctors for the St. Louis Medical Journal and perhaps he included Dr. Simpson. If so, could I have a photocopy? Perhaps you have other information on Dr. Simpson. I do know that he married the sister of Rufus Easton and that the reason Simpson became Postmaster was because Easton had been Postmaster previously.

This I think might be an interesting piece to write up for one of the medical school's publications or for the College of Pharmacy newsletter.

There is no rush in assembling this information, and I thought you should be aware of it. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Eric P. Newman', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Eric P. Newman

EPN:bv

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11 September 1992

Mr. Eric P. Newman
6450 Cecil Avenue
St. Louis, Missouri 63105

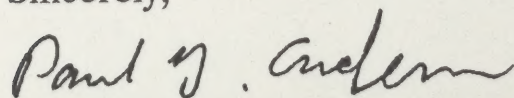
Dear Mr. Newman:

At your request, I have enclosed the pages in Soule' *Our Medical Ancestors* (1978) on Dr. Robert Simpson.

Soule's mention of Simpson's autobiography sounded intriguing and I made a special search in hopes of finding a copy in the collections that the Medical Society gave us. Unfortunately, we appear not to have it. I assume that it is a unique item or extreme rarity that the Historical Society possesses. I would be interested in learning what you uncover in your further research.

Thanks for the photocopy of the 50 cent St. Louis Drug and Medicine Store note. I will place it in our vertical files under Simpson.

Sincerely,



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Head, Archives and Rare Books

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DOCTOR ROBERT SIMPSON

Doctor Robert Simpson, born in 1785, was a graduate of the medical college in Philadelphia. In 1809 he was appointed Assistant Surgeon of the United States Army and was ordered to St. Louis. After a year spent with the troops that established Fort Madison, he returned to St. Louis. On July 25, 1812, it is recorded that Doctor Simpson will practice Medicine and Surgery in the town and vicinity of St. Louis. His office was in Manuel Lisa's home.

Simpson must have been an aggressive entrepreneur. Medicine seemed to be a most immaterial part of his living pattern. Among the Lucas Papers at the Missouri Historical Society we find a receipt dated December 15, 1813 for 99½ gallons of whiskey at 93¼ cents and a charge for 3 barrels containing the same. The total cost was \$99.58½. A ream of paper cost \$6.00, a toothbrush 25 cents and a bunch of quills cost \$1. Shortly after locating in St. Louis, he opened the first drug store in the town. The post office was moved to his store on October 1, 1812 and at the same time Doctor Simpson was appointed Postmaster. The following year, the drug store was moved and in 1815 a connection was formed with Doctor Pryor Quarles in the Drug and Medicine business.

On December 15, 1815, a newspaper item stated that "Dr. Robert Simpson is hard run for cash to pay his debts, and he will sell a number of notes and accounts in reasonable terms, particularly to those interested. After January 1, 1816, they will be offered at auction."

The Lucas Papers at the Missouri Historical Society reveal that in 1815-16 Dr. Simpson was involved in several land deals in the St. Louis and New Madrid areas.

In 1822, he was elected to the Missouri Legislature; 1863 found him as Collector of St. Louis County. This office he filled for two terms following which he served as Sheriff of St. Louis County for two terms. Then came a period of "merchandising," that is transacting business on Main Street between Market and Chestnut Streets. Later he was elected City Comptroller and was Cashier of Boatmen's Savings Institution.

Simpson married Bricia Smith in St. Louis on June 11, 1811. Seven children graced this union. Some died in infancy. None lived in St. Louis as adults.

This interesting person was known for gentility of temper, a high sense of humor and uncorruptible integrity. He lived in the community of his choice. He saw it grow from a town of twelve hundred residents to become a large city. An extensive autobiography dated July 1, 1868 reviews his long life and it is worth a careful reading by anyone interested in the growth of St. Louis early in the nineteenth century. Dr. Simpson concludes his autobiography... "This world is a good world, and if people would only look at the bright side of it, there would not be so many jump off in search of a world they know not of, and as I am in the full possession of the secret of health, I do not know why I may not live to see Missouri take that rank and position among her sister states that she has long since been entitled to, and would have attained but for the course of slavery."

Doctor Robert Simpson died May 2, 1873 at his home, 2911 Washington Avenue.

DOCTOR ARTHUR NELSON

Doctor Arthur Nelson's professional card was offered on April 24, 1818. In June of that year, he purchased the drug business of Doctors Simpson and Quarles. In 1820, he resided in the lower end of Main Street.

DOCTOR LAIDLY HOFFMAN

Another American born physician was *Doctor Laidly Hoffman*, who was born in New York on October 17, 1796. In 1819 he left New York, came to St. Louis and opened a drug store on the west side of Main Street, north of Market. In 1826 he was one of the 65 citizens comprising the old Phoenix Fire Company. In 1835 an injury necessitated amputation of his right hand. He did not continue in practice for long thereafter. Subsequently, he resided in Cincinnati and Cleveland where he developed an extensive vineyard. Doctor Hoffman returned to St. Louis in 1874 and died on November 5, 1878.

From Medicine in Saint Louis; Our Medical Ancestors, 1764-1864, by Samuel D. Soule (1978)